

CASE STUDY: CITY OF MELBOURNE - QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET PRECINCT RENEWAL

SUMMARY:

Melbourne is the fastest growing capital city in Australia. It is anticipated that Melbourne's population will effectively double from around 4.3 million currently to over 8 million by the 2050s, at which point it will overtake Sydney to become the largest Australian city. In order to accommodate this growth urban renewal will need to occur both within the City of Melbourne and across metropolitan Melbourne more broadly.

The City of Melbourne is engaged in an ongoing process of planning for the growth of the city. It has been preparing the strategic framework that underpins this renewal for some time through the development of a series of structure plans and strategies on sustainability, economic development and city shaping.

In October 2013, the City of Melbourne announced the largest investment in its history to renew the Queen Victoria Market, and create one of the world's great market precincts. The site is strategically placed in the north of CBD, and provides a key civic space to deliver on the City's strategies and aspirations for the market and the City.

Currently the Queen Victoria Market precinct is not performing as well as it could with respect to sustainability. This is both in relation to mitigating the greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts associated with market operations, and also in adapting to the ongoing effects of a changing climate. For example, the precinct lacks any significant level of sustainable infrastructure, and the current open-lot customer car park is also one of the most significant contributors to the urban heat island effect in the City.

RESULTS:

Aspirations to address sustainability through the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal Program (the Program) were distilled through an extensive community engagement and strategic briefing process and ultimately captured in the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal (QVMPR) Master Plan, endorsed by the Melbourne City Council in July 2015¹. The Master Plan will be implemented from 2017 to 2021².

The Master Plan adopts a number of sustainability goals:

- Zero carbon – maximising energy efficiency, embedded renewable energy sources and investment in off-site renewable energy.
- Zero waste – maximising opportunities for waste reduction and recycling in design, construction and operation.
- Resource efficient – through sustainable procurement and resource recovery systems and infrastructure.
- Climate resilient – cooling the precinct and enhancing biodiversity by integrating green infrastructure, stormwater harvesting, re-use and water sensitive design.
- Economically sustainable – encourage opportunities for business diversity, innovation and economic development with a focus on activities which foster the commercial viability of the Queen Victoria Market.
- Socially sustainable – providing enhanced community opportunities that are accessible and create local employment and acknowledge culture, heritage and identity.

A Precinct Renewal Sustainability Plan (PRSP) was subsequently developed to describe the strategic pathways and key implementation actions to be undertaken throughout the Program, as well as to manage potential risks and other considerations, in order to ensure that the desired sustainability outcomes are achieved.

The development of the PRSP was a key deliverable of the C40 City Advisor (CA) to Melbourne. In developing the Plan the CA was able to draw on a range of C40 initiatives, including the Low Carbon Districts Network and Climate Positive Development Program, to obtain insights from various cities into best practices and lessons learned.

With respect to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, the Queen Victoria Market currently consumes an average of approximately 2.1GWh of electricity annually and produces around 2,250 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, including emissions from non-electrical sources, such as natural gas and transport fuels.

1 Further information on the community engagement process, the Master Plan and the QVM Precinct Renewal more broadly can be found at Participate Melbourne, the City's innovative online engagement platform <http://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/queenvictoriamarket>

2 An overview what will be delivered by 2021 can be found at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/urban-planning/local-area-planning/queen-victoria-market-precinct-renewal-plan/Pages/qvm-renewal-at-a-glance.aspx>

The rollout of the Program will almost certainly see energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions increase in the absence of any other action. It is estimated that, at the completion of the Program, the projected electricity consumption of QVM and City owned and/or operated assets within the renewal precinct will be around 4.4GWh annually, and that this would contribute to growth in overall total annual emissions to approximately 5,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; more than double the current level.

The PRSP describes a series of strategies and associated actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a net-zero carbon position. The key steps in the net-zero carbon pathway are to:

- Optimise energy efficiency of all new buildings and major refurbishments
- Maximise the onsite production of clean, renewable energy
- Directly bulk purchase renewable energy for the balance of the electricity demand
- Purchase offsets for all remaining emissions, such as those associated with the use of natural gas, transport and stationary fuels, and waste.

In addition to addressing greenhouse gas emissions, the PRSP also articulates a range of strategies to achieve the remaining sustainability goals.

The PRSP was endorsed by the QVMPR Program Control Group in July 2016, and will now be developed into a public facing document to outline the Program's sustainability goals and actions. The public version of the Plan will be released in early 2017 before program implementation commences within the precinct, engaging stakeholders with the plan and the broader sustainability aspirations and actions for the precinct.

In addition to the PRSP, the City of Melbourne will also measure the overall social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Precinct Renewal by achieving a certified rating under the Green Star Communities rating tool. Green Star Communities provides a framework to evaluate the social, economic and environmental sustainability attributes of the planning, design, and construction of large scale development projects, at a precinct, neighbourhood, or community scale. It evaluates projects against a holistic set of distinct criteria, organised across the categories of Governance, Design, Liveability, Economic Prosperity Environment and Innovation.

Achieving the QVMPR sustainability goals will not be without its challenges, such as ensuring that sustainability targets continue to be met throughout the implementation of the Program. To support this, a performance based approach has been adopted, including the use of the Greenstar rating system as the common sustainability framework for both individual buildings and across the precinct. The adoption of a partnership model incorporating all of the parties involved in the Program delivery, including the Council, the QVM management and the private developer(s) will also be instrumental in this regard.

Another key challenge is that the market must remain operational throughout the renewal period. However, rather than detracting from the sustainability goals, this provides an opportunity to work with QVM management, traders and customers to engage and embed new behaviours and practices over the course of the Program, rather than waiting until its completion.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS:

While the Program is still in the early stages of implementation, from a sustainability perspective, success to date can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- A committed Council. The Program was a key initiative of the 2012-16 Council, and championed by the Lord Mayor Robert Doyle and the previous Council. With the return of the Lord Mayor and a number of Councillors in the 2016 election, the ongoing political leadership and commitment to the Program will be a key contributor to its successful delivery.
- A dedicated Precinct Renewal Team. The City has established a dedicated team for the delivery of the Program; with its own Program Control Group, chaired by the CEO of the City and involving the QVM CEO and external advisors from diverse backgrounds across public infrastructure delivery and place making. This structure and governance provides the dedicated focus and rapid decision making ability required for this dynamic project with its high level of public interest.
- The size and scale of the precinct and the Program. The site offers a unique opportunity as a wholly owned asset of the City to implement transformational change. The site can act as an exemplar for the implementation of the City's sustainability aspirations and will potentially form a living lab for testing and scaling approaches that can then be implemented in other urban renewal areas throughout the city.
- A C40 City Advisor. Working cross-functionally within both the Precinct Renewal team and the City administration more broadly, particularly with the Urban Sustainability team, The City Advisor assisted in ensuring that key elements of the City's sustainability strategies, policies and programs have been brought to the Precinct Renewal process, while also providing a means to channel best practices and lessons learned from other C40 member cities.